

DHS Expected Practices

Specialty: Ophthalmology

Subject: Cataract Surgery

Date: May 20, 2013

Purpose:

To outline the guidelines and referral recommendations for cataract surgery patients.

Target Audience:

DHS and Community Partner providers using the eConsult system

Expected Practice:

All patients being referred to ophthalmology clinics for cataract surgery should have a documented visual acuity with their current glasses in the referral.

In the Los Angeles County DHS system cataract surgery will be considered when a patient has significant visual dysfunction that is thought to be due to cataract. Significant visual dysfunction typically includes:

- Visual acuity of 20/50 or worse based on recent refraction (i.e., within 2 years)
- Problems with extreme glare
- Having documented difficulty performing work required activities due to reduced visual acuity despite wearing corrective lenses
- Failing the driver license visual acuity examination
- Need for better view of retina or optic nerve for evaluation and treatment of posterior eye diseases
- Anisometropia (or significantly unequal refractive power of the patient's two eyes)

This Expected Practice was developed by a DHS Specialty-Primary Care Work Group to fulfill the DHS mission to ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, and cost-effective health care. SPC Work Groups, composed of specialist and primary care provider representatives from across LA County DHS, are guided by 1) real-life practice conditions at our facilities, 2) available clinical evidence, and 3) the principle that we must provide equitable care for the entire population that LA County DHS is responsible for, not just those that appear in front of us. It is recognized that in individual situations a provider's clinical judgment may vary from this Expected Practice, but in such cases compelling documentation for the exception should be provided in the medical record.

- Other unique/necessary circumstances

If possible, patients complaining of decreased vision who have not had a refraction for glasses in the past two years should be sent for refraction prior to referral for cataract surgery (please refer to DHS Expected Practices for Refractive Error). Although we encourage use of local resources outside DHS for simple refractive error in adults, refraction may be performed by LAC DHS optometrists if needed for evaluation/management of eye disease.

When referring patients, please provide the following information in the referral to Optometry/Ophthalmology:

- Visual acuity
- Reason for cataract evaluation request
- How cataract was diagnosed, attaching a copy of previous eye care provider note if available
- Presence of any other concerning factors